

Activists from 'Trump Country' explain what's at stake >>Pages 10&11

Teachers' strikes set to sweep US



Hatred of Muslims dominated group's march in Birmingham last week >>Pages 4&5

Football Lads Alliance racist face revealed



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DEFEND CORBYN

● **FREEDOM FOR PALESTINE**
● **SAY NO TO ANTISEMITISM**

by NICK CLARK

LABOUR leader Jeremy Corbyn is under a renewed attack from right wing opponents in his party.

They accuse him of encouraging antisemitism inside Labour—and demand that he expels some of his supporters from the party.

Enemies of Corbyn and the left say his long-standing support for Palestinians means he is blind to antisemitism and that he has made Labour a safe place for racists.

Such suggestions have long been used to undermine the left's support for Palestinians.

The same accusations are now being used to attack the Labour



Jeremy Corbyn speaking at a Refugees Are Welcome protest in 2015

Picture: PA

left. That's why several right wing Labour MPs—who otherwise have shown no interest in anti-racism—joined a protest this week.

Most of them have recently called for tougher immigration controls as a way of appealing to racist "concerns" about migrants.

Where one form of racism—such as Islamophobia—thrives, other forms of racism grow too.

Fighting antisemitism today means building campaigns that unite Muslims, Jews and others against all forms of racism.

The left has always led the fight against antisemitism—it shouldn't concede that it is to blame for it.

>>Page 6

JUSTICE

'Hold cops to account over deaths in custody'

TWENTY YEARS after her brother Christopher Alder died in a police station in Hull, Janet Alder is still fighting for truth and justice.

"The number of people, particularly black men like Christopher, dying in police custody is unbelievable," she told Socialist Worker ahead of a planned protest.

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FRANCE



Rail unions lead the fightback against Macron

FRENCH RAIL workers are set to launch the first of 36 strikes next week.

They're fighting president Emmanuel Macron's plan to strip them of rights they won 100 years ago.

It follows a strike by around a million public sector workers last week—and 1,500 demonstrations.

>>Page 3

SCHOOLS

Newham victories show that we can beat academies

PARENTS, TEACHERS and campaigners in east London are celebrating. The governing body of Keir Hardie school has voted not to proceed with academisation following a series of strikes and protests.

It's another sign that resistance can win.

>>Page 7



THE THINGS THEY SAY

'Parents and children will be relieved there are mercifully few chimneys left'

Labour's Lord Watson replies to Tory peer Andrew Robathan's plan for the national curriculum to include a couple of hours for children to pick up litter

'A bunch of humourless, po-faced, hat-wearing socialists who insist on lecturing everyone else'

Liz Truss, chief secretary to the Treasury, on Labour

'A terrible Stalinist purge'

Oleaginous Labour peer Lord Hain attacks Jeremy Corbyn's decision to sack Owen Smith, the shadow Northern Ireland secretary

'You can't tie up here'

A Transport for London official stops a trawler from mooring to let Jacob Rees Mogg throw a fish in the Thames because he didn't have a permit

'Insensitive TV bosses have been slammed for filming a drama about the murder of Milly Dowler'

The Sun forgets that hacking Milly Dowler's phone may also have been insensitive



Secretive Etonians may be less than fully competent

SCL GROUP, the parent company of Cambridge Analytica, was set up in 2005. Led by two Old Etonians, Alex Nix and Nigel Oakes, its pitch was simple—help politicians win votes.

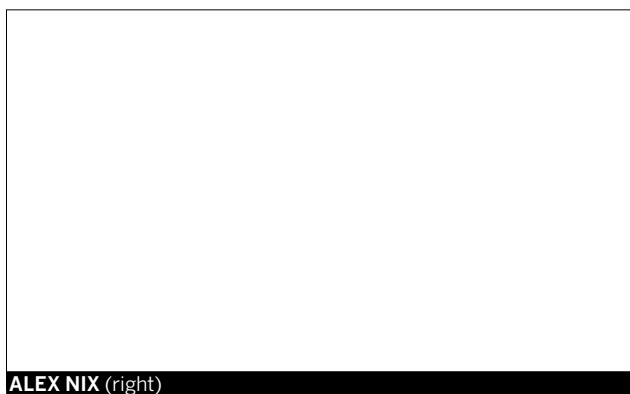
It also claimed the military could win hearts and minds.

In presentations to potential clients, it boasted of using “the science of influence and persuasion to help governments, their militaries and commercial companies to persuade key audience groups to measurably change their behaviour”.

The company quickly built up an impressive client list.

They worked on projects for the British and US militaries and played a role in a number of election campaigns.

One ex-employee



ALEX NIX (right)

described staff “running around as though they were members of the security services”.

However real Facebook's abuse of its users' trust in giving its data to Cambridge Analytica, the company was hardly the master manipulator it claimed to be.

Cambridge Analytica's

“psychographic” techniques, supposedly able to profile voters' deepest emotions, are mostly advertising hokum.

That doesn't mean it isn't ominous.

SCL worked for the US and British governments with its defence projects in Syria, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan and

Mexico.

It secured work for lobbyists working for John Bolton, the new US national security adviser.

They also worked for the Texas senator Ted Cruz's failed presidential campaign.

According to US magazine Mother Jones, the company told the Cruz campaign that a powerful software tool named Ripon could help it target voters.

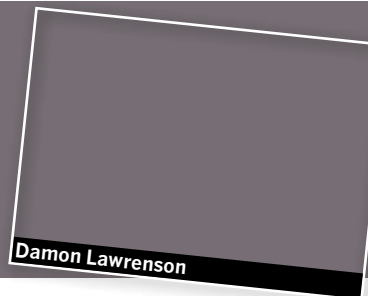
But that tool didn't exist.

It also told the Ben Carson campaign that it was adept in TV advertising, but turned out to be inept. So bad that people thought the company was fake.

Even the Trump campaign chair—and probable money launderer—Paul Manafort once described it as “just full of shit, right?”

For once he was right.

A TORY council paid almost £1 million to a consultancy owned by its former chief executive. Northamptonshire county council gave £931,364 over five years to DDL consulting, owned by Damon Lawrenson. He left the council last week. He had been its acting chief since November on £1,000 a day. The council passed a £40 million package of cuts this month.



Damon Lawrenson

THE LIBERAL Democrats sent a questionnaire to members that asked if they enjoyed being, well, Liberal Democrats.

Now the results have been revealed and it seems 80 percent of members are thrilled, although 1 percent don't enjoy being party members and 19 percent aren't really sure.

Cops gave workers' info to blacklisters

UNDERCOVER police officers infiltrated trade unions and fed information to the construction industry, which used it to blacklist construction workers, the cops finally admitted last week.

The Independent Office for Police Conduct yesterday said investigators had concluded that, on the balance of probabilities, the police had supplied information on the blacklist.

The illegal list, maintained by the Consulting Association,

was active between at least 1993 and 2009.

As much as £250 million has been paid in compensation by some of Britain's richest construction companies.

Dave Smith, secretary of the Blacklist Support Group, said that he had waited six years for the news, Dave said, “People thought we were conspiracy theorists. The police are supposed to detect crime.”

“Instead they infiltrated trade unions and provided intelligence to an unlawful corporate conspiracy.”



Activists storm out of spy cops inquiry

CAMPAIGNERS and their legal team have walked out of the inquiry into undercover policing demanding that its chairman Sir John Mitting stand down.

Mitting has brought a vigour to his task, repeatedly ruling that the names of various cops mustn't be revealed in order to protect their privacy.

Over 200 of the participants, including Doreen and Neville Lawrence, women activists who were deceived into relationships with undercover cops, anti-racist campaigners and

trade unionists withdrew from the inquiry.

The campaigners have repeatedly raised concerns about cops being granted anonymity.

Doreen Lawrence, the mother of murdered teenager Stephen Lawrence, said, “I want to know the names of the police officers who spied on me, my family and our campaign for justice. The chair is not allowing that.”

For more go to bit.ly/undercovercop1

Tory links to data thieves

THERESA May's spokesman said last week that the government had stopped working with Cambridge Analytica's parent company, SCL Group, in 2015.

That wasn't true.

The Ministry of Defence paid £42,000 to a branch of SCL for “data analytics” between December and February.

May's spokesman said last Wednesday that departments had had three contracts with SCL in the past. One was with the Foreign Office in 2008-09, another with the Home Office in 2009 and the final with the MoD in 2014-15.

The MoD confirmed it signed the recent



Boris 'oversight' Johnson

contract with SCL Insight, an associated company which is 40 percent owned by SCL Group and 60 percent owned by Nigel Oakes, SCL Group's founder.

SCL had provisional List X accreditation until 2013. This granted it access to secret documents, and it had three previous official contracts with the department to provide analytics. In total, the MoD has paid SCL and its affiliated companies £347,000.

British officials were also trained by SCL in propaganda at Nato's Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence in Latvia in 2015.

SCL had a contract with the Home Office for a training project in 2009 and was paid by the Foreign Office for a “communications project” between 2008 and 2009.

Boris Johnson, the foreign secretary, had an undeclared meeting in December 2016 with Alexander Nix, the suspended chief executive of Cambridge Analytica. The Foreign Office said the meeting was not registered on transparency records “due to an oversight”.

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French workers revolt to derail free market reform

by CHARLIE KIMBER

A WAVE of strikes by French rail workers beginning next Tuesday will signal the start of a crucial confrontation with president Emmanuel Macron's government.

They are regarded as the best-organised section of French workers and have inflicted bitter defeats on previous governments.

Macron wants to humble them in the hope that it will demoralise everyone else.

His government is pressing for privatisation and wants to strip away century-old agreements that prevent mass redundancies of rail workers.

All the rail unions have announced that, from next week, workers will walk out for two out of every five days—a total of 36 strike days.

The SUD-Rail union plans an indefinite strike, where its members will decide at daily assemblies if the action should continue.

It's not just rail workers who are fighting. Around a million French public sector workers struck last Thursday against plans to axe 120,000 jobs and bring in more temporary contracts, agency workers and productivity-linked pay.

There were over 1,500 demonstrations involving around half a million people, according to the CGT union federation.

Hope

Macron was elected as the great new "centrist" hope last year. Now he is enthusiastically tearing into workers, boosting military spending and making racist laws even harsher.

Paris health assistant Elisa Horvat told Socialist Worker, "It's great to be on the streets together. We can beat Macron if we are all as one."

"There are teachers, admin workers, health workers and electricity and gas workers here—and university



HUNDREDS OF thousands took to the streets across France last Thursday

PICTURES: GUY SMALLMAN

and school students." Around a third of rail workers also struck last Thursday—even though there was no national strike call.

At least 15 schools in Paris, and 50 nationwide, were closed after school students blockaded them in protest at new selective admissions procedures.

Several universities were shut—some as part of continuing occupations (see right).



Heralding the resistance

Unemployed workers' groups joined the marches in protest at Macron's new benefits sanctions—modelled on the Tories' regime in Britain. The protests came on the eve of the 50th anniversary of the great revolt of May 1968. Many activists say that "the best way to remember '68 is to do it again". This is a great opportunity to stop Macron

in his tracks—and to smash his neoliberal assault.

The bosses know this. "If Mr Macron wins this battle, it will be easier to implement more reforms," French political scientist Thomas Guénolé told the bosses' Financial Times newspaper.

"If he loses this battle he will be another head of state that pushed too far too soon and has to stop."

The union leaders must not back off from confronting Macron.

What's your story?

Email with your ideas
reports@socialistworker.co.uk

Strike wave could grow

OTHER GROUPS of French workers are pressing their union leaders to strike and demonstrate alongside the rail workers.

Some refuse workers, postal workers and others have already pledged to take action on 3 April during the first round of the rail strikes.

This is the broadening of the battle that the rail workers need.

The CGT union federation has called for 19 April to be a day of demonstrations across France.

That needs to be

turned into a call for a general strike.

Olivier, a train driver, told Socialist Worker, "We want to see the whole of the working class in the streets against president Emmanuel Macron. And the best way to do that is to see all of us on strike."

"It's not like Britain, we don't need ballots."

"The union leaders could and should make the call now for 19 April."

If French workers beat Macron, it will be a major blow against neoliberalism across Europe.

STUDENTS

Far right attack on occupation

A GROUP of masked men violently attacked students who had occupied a lecture theatre at the University of Montpellier last Thursday evening.

Several students were hospitalised, two with serious injuries.

A far right blog has claimed it was organised by a fascist organisation.

Shockingly it emerged that one of those who facilitated the attacks was a leading member of staff.

An occupier said, "Soon after midnight, we were quietly eating and listening to music."

"There were about 50 of us when a group of a dozen individuals, hooded and

Students protest the day after the attack

armed with sticks and pieces of broken wooden pallets, entered through the side doors.

"They jostled us, hit us. Some of us fell to the ground, they were hit again."

The dean of the faculty of law, Philippe Petel, was accused of opening the doors to the assailants and giving a thumbs up after the attack.

He initially defended his actions, but later resigned.

At least one other academic staff member is suspected to have been involved.

Demonstrations took place at several universities across France in solidarity with the Montpellier students.

And trade unions have called for a full investigation into links between the fascists and management.

Send solidarity to **Solidaires Etudiant-e-s Montpellier** on Facebook or to **@SolidairesEtu34** on Twitter

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Public sector workers



Marches in Birmingham reveal the nasty racist face of FLA

by NICK CLARK in Birmingham

TWO RACIST marches in Birmingham last Saturday showed an urgent need for mass anti-racist opposition on the streets.

One march—by the Football Lads Alliance (FLA)—saw up to 2,000 people cheer Nazis and the far right.

Another slightly larger rally by breakaway group the Democratic Football Lads Alliance (DFLA) was addressed by leading Ukip figures (see right).

Former English Defence League leader, the Nazi Tommy Robinson, was greeted on the “original” group’s march as a hero and a celebrity.

For Britain party leader Anne Marie Waters, who was deemed too Islamophobic for the racist Ukip party, told the crowd that Islam was “the big problem”. Marchers booed at the mention of Islam.

“I’ve heard it all. The one big excuse—you’ll offend moderate Muslims with your language,” said Waters. “Well I’m sorry, but millions of decent British people are offended by this religion”.

Waters attacked the European Union (EU) as a “totalitarian, fascist tyranny” that had “knowingly and deliberately imported hell on earth to Europe”.

Mobilisations

The two mobilisations were the first since the FLA put some 20,000 people on the streets of central London last October.

The FLA has since split in a row over money—with activists accusing founder John Meighan of keeping merchandise sales cash for himself.

Isolated, Meighan has drawn closer to openly racist and fascist far right groups. He told his march on Saturday, “All we’re doing is standing up to what’s wrong.”

“All we want is a safer place for our children and grandchildren.”

But every speaker attacked Islam, migrants and refugees—without pretending to distinguish between “extremists” and “moderates”.

A speaker introduced as Arlene

BACK STORY

The FLA showed its true colours in Birmingham

● It has previously claimed it is a “non-political” movement

● Saturday’s demonstrations saw speakers from far right and racist organisations

● It announced plans to hold its next march in Manchester

● Anti-racists must take the threat of the FLA seriously

from German organisation 21 Decibels spoke about “sexual violence against women resulting from uncontrolled mass immigration.”

“Violent misogyny is not some minor aspect of Islam—it is central,” she said. “Calling someone racist for criticising a perverted belief system—as Islam is—is moronic.”

Luke Nash Jones from Make Britain Great Again used the language of the US alt right and led the crowd in chants of, “We Want Trump”.

Robinson himself didn’t speak—but was lauded by every speaker. His arrival at the march was heralded by huge cheers and the entire crowd singing his name.

Big sections of the crowd carried on singing his name along the short route of the march. These soon turned to chants of, “We want our country back”.

As the march finished at the multi-cultural Bull Ring market, marchers began pointing at Asian people.

And they chanted, “Stick your fucking Isis up your arse”.

Meighan announced that the FLA will hold its next march in Manchester.

It will need a serious response from anti-racists.



On the anti-racist counter demonstration



PART OF the Democratic FLA demonstration in Birmingham

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

The Football Lads’ fragile alliance fractures—but remains dangerous

THE MARCH by the Democratic Football Lads Alliance (DLFA) was at much greater pains to pretend it is not racist and to appear respectable.

But organisers openly endorsed the racist Ukip party whose leader—the headline speaker—was cheered enthusiastically.

And the rally ended with calls to march in towns affected by child abuse scandals—as far right and Nazi groups have done.

DFLA member Justin Smith ended the rally by threatening, “Manchester, Telford,

Rotherham, Rochdale. We’re coming to see you all soon. We’ve had enough of watching our democracy and our freedom of speech and our children getting raped.”

The DFLA later said it planned a protest in Telford on Friday of this week against what it called “violent racist sex terrorists.” It accused the Labour Party of “selling our children to the sex slave trade for votes”.

The march was much more like previous FLA marches, with various football casual

firms represented and memorial wreaths being laid.

It also had support from the Justice4the21—a campaign by family members of some of the 21 people killed in the 1974 Birmingham pub bombings.

The campaign was made the focus of the march. But speakers used it to make speeches with underlying or implied Islamophobic messages.

Ukip leader Gerard Batten, who began his leadership by calling Islam a “death cult,” said, “It isn’t enough just to oppose terrorism...we have to oppose the ideologies that use terrorism.”

Earlier this year Batten said Islam “glorifies violence”.

Ukip leader Gerard Batten

Echoing this he told Saturday’s march, “We now see terrorism in every continent in the world.”

A crowd member shouted back, “Islamic terrorism—we know who it is”.

Organiser

Ukip MEP Bill Etheridge once told young members to copy Hitler because he “achieved a great deal”. He also spoke. After he finished march organiser Phillip Hickin said, “You all know who you’re voting next time don’t you—Ukip.”

Both FLA groups are now lining up with and promoting racist and far right figures. The idea that it is a “non-political” movement—put forward by Meighan—has now been proven to be false.

“We’re going to restore ourselves as a force in national politics,” said Batten. “What better way than to start off by supporting this cause.”

Even more right wing forces are looking to the original FLA. Saturday’s march was the largest far right march for a long time.

A new racist movement is taking shape—and it is a dangerous force.

Standing up to racists has never been more important

OVER 200 people joined a protest against the FLA called by Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) in Birmingham city centre last Saturday.

There was strong support from trade unionists with banners from the UCU, Midlands TUC and several NEU branches. There were speakers from these unions and the CWU.

Speakers from local groups insisted that Birmingham would not be divided and that the FLA was not welcome.

There was anger that striking home care workers could not hold a rally in the city centre because of the



Anti-racists challenged the FLA in Birmingham

FLA presence.

Weyman Bennett, co-convenor of SUTR, told Socialist Worker, “It is very important we stood together in unity today, but the size of the FLA

marches can’t be ignored. There needs to be a bigger and stronger united movement against the FLA and the racism and Islamophobia they feed on.”

Abuse used by racist cynics

THE Democratic FLA march in Telford on Friday will try to use the child sexual exploitation to push violent racism.

But the police are continuing to fail victims of child sexual exploitation in Telford.

The Sunday Mirror recently reported that up to 1,000 children could have been abused over the last 40 years in a town of just 170,000 people.

Abusers targeted girls as young as 11 and subjected them to beatings and rape. The Mirror said that three murders and two other deaths have been linked to the scandal.

They are also continuing to fail to understand that grooming and CSE is not consensual.

“It is attitudes like those in the memo that stops survivors reporting the abuse. If the authorities do not believe survivors where else do they have to turn?”

One victim spoke to Good Morning Britain about her experiences. “My abuse started with boys my own age who went on to sell my phone number to older men,” she said.

“I was in cars that were stopped by the police, and they asked me no questions of why I was there with a much older man.”

The Mirror said social workers alerted police to the abuse in the 1990s but cops took ten years to investigate. It added that cops failed to

investigate one recent case five times until an MP intervened.

Another victim, known as Paula, spoke to the Birmingham Mail in 2015. She said she’d reported a rape to police but said she was too scared to have him arrested.

“They just said if I didn’t want him arrested then they’d have to say it was consensual,” said Paula. “I don’t feel as if anyone listened to me, nobody cared.”

A court case in 2012 saw seven Asian men jailed for child sexual abuse offences. Racists have used the case, and the wider scandal, to try and paint all Asian men as abusers.

Abuse and sexist attitudes aren’t the preserve of Asian men. The authorities failed the victims because the system doesn’t treat vulnerable young women and girls as a priority.

Sadie Robinson

Socialist Worker
WHAT WE THINK

THROW OUT TORY HEALTH DEAL AND DEFEND NHS

THETORIES showed their contempt for the health service and those who work in it with a miserly pay offer last week.

Anger over the NHS forced them to offer more than in the previous seven years—and retreat from proposals to steal a day’s annual leave.

The limited concessions show the Tories’ weakness—and that workers can win much more.

The offer still represents a real terms pay cut and tries to sneak productivity-linked pay through the back door. It would also slash unsocial hours pay for the lowest paid and ambulance workers.

Over a million health workers in England would get a 6.5 percent pay rise over three years—3 percent in 2018-19, then 1.7 percent in both following years. They would also get a 1.1 percent lump sum in the second year. But the RPI rate of inflation is running at 3.6 percent.

The overblown wage rises reported in the mainstream press include increments that workers would expect to receive anyway.

And fewer than 1 percent of NHS staff will receive the 29 percent that some reports

quoted. One of the most pernicious proposals—overhauling pay increments—could see thousands lose out and boost bullying bosses.

Each pay band within the NHS’s Agenda for Change pay system is subdivided into increments. Health workers move up one annually automatically until they reach the top of their band.

This reflects the increased skill, experience and responsibilities that more senior staff have.

Moving up the increments generates a pay increase on top of any nationally agreed deal.

But this deal would see fewer increments and progression would not be annual.

“Concessions show the Tories’ weakness—and that workers can win much more

Donald Trump has appointed warmonger John Bolton as his national security adviser.

Everyone opposed to US imperial intervention should be worried. Bolton has pushed for war throughout his career. In 2003 he wanted to bomb North Korea and Iran—little has changed.

Even the blood-soaked later years of the George W Bush administration were too soft for Bolton.

“I didn’t spend 31 days in

Florida to end up where we are now,” he said then.

It was an allusion to his role in fixing the result of the Florida vote in the 2000 presidential election for Bush.

Trump kicked out the general HR McMaster to make room for Bolton.

Earlier this month he replaced secretary of state Rex Tillerson with CIA chief Mike Pompeo. Pompeo has previously accused US Muslim leaders of being “potentially complicit” in terrorist attacks.

Worse still, the deal instructs bosses “to apply a process linked to appraisals before allowing staff to progress to the next pay point”.

This is productivity-linked pay through the back door. Appraisals would include reaching local targets, which an NHS crisis caused by underfunding has made near impossible to achieve.

It would give managers power to discriminate against those who are “difficult” or union activists.

And institutional racism and sexism in the NHS means black workers and women are likely to suffer most.

Health workers deserve much better. The 14 health unions had originally put in an above-inflation pay claim of 3.9 percent and an £800 lump sum.

All the union leaderships—apart from the GMB—are now pushing for their members to accept this shoddy deal.

There has to be a big campaign for rejection ahead of the health unions’ consultation that will begin in mid-April. Activists must tell their union leaders to reject the deal and ballot for strikes.

Strikes could win on pay—and force out Theresa May’s car-crash government.

NEW THREAT FROM TRUMP

DONALD TRUMP has appointed warmonger John Bolton as his national security adviser.

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Earlier this month he replaced secretary of state Rex Tillerson with CIA chief Mike Pompeo. Pompeo has previously accused US Muslim leaders of being “potentially complicit” in terrorist attacks.

McMaster and Tillerson are dangerous, but Bolton and Pompeo are more so.

Trump is filling foreign policy posts in the White House with creatures from the darkest recesses of the Washington swamp.

That should send a chill down the spine of anyone opposed to further US wars.

Bolton’s appointment is another reason to take to the streets if Trump ever dares to comes to Britain.

SOCIALIST

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ANALYSIS

NICK CLARK



False antisemitism claim must be fought

PARTS OF the Labour right describe the latest attacks on Jeremy Corbyn as a “tipping point”. They say this is the moment that Jewish people stood up to antisemitism inside the Labour Party.

What they also mean is that this could be a tipping point in their fight against Corbyn and the resurgent left inside the party.

Long-time enemies of Corbyn inside Labour have launched the biggest rebellion against him since their failed leadership challenge in 2016. It’s a culmination of more than two years of accusations of antisemitism against the Labour left.

Ever since Corbyn was elected, right wing politicians and media pundits have claimed that his support for Palestinians would encourage antisemites to join the Labour Party.

A statement released on Sunday by the Jewish Board of Deputies and the Jewish Leadership Council accused the left of an “obsessive hatred of Zionism, Zionists and Israel”.

It added, “When Jeremy Corbyn was elected leader of the Labour Party, Jews expressed sincere and profound fears as to how such politics would impact on their wellbeing.”

These accusations have a longer history than Corbyn’s leadership. Supporters of Palestine are used to being told that their criticism of Israel is antisemitic. Defenders of Israel constantly try to conflate criticism of Israel’s founding ideology Zionism with antisemitism.

It’s not the case. Zionism isn’t simply the idea that Jewish people have the right to self-determination or their own state.

It’s the belief that Israel should be an exclusively Jewish state—and that Palestinians should be excluded from any form of independent political control. Racism towards Palestinians is at its very core.

Similar accusations take on a more Islamophobic edge when used against Muslims.

Many Muslims in Britain identify strongly with Palestinians. Racists have used this to paint Muslims as antisemitic—and to claim that the left has made common cause with antisemites by campaigning alongside them.

Reactionary

This is helped by the idea that the conflict in Palestine is about a clash between Muslims and Jews—or between reactionary Muslims and Israel’s “liberal democracy”.

Now new elements are being added to this narrative.

Antisemitic conspiracy theories—such as that Jews secretly control governments and banking—began with the far right. They were a staple of Nazi propaganda.

Yet over the past week commentators have tried to recast those tropes as another form of “left antisemitism”.

Dave Rich wrote for the New Statesman website this week that these tropes actually come from “the margins of the left”.

The Board of Deputies and Jewish Leadership Council claimed Corbyn was “ideologically fixed within a far left view that is instinctively hostile to mainstream Jewish communities”.

It’s not a diversion to point out that those who accuse the left of antisemitism support the Tories and the right—and often don’t mind pandering to racism themselves.

The Jewish Socialists’ Group reminded supporters that Board of Deputies president Jonathan Arkush was “one of the first to congratulate Donald Trump on his election as President of the United States on behalf of the Board”.

This is despite the fact that Trump has deliberately encouraged his racist far right supporters—facilitating the return of Nazi marches to US city streets.

Many of those Labour MPs who joined the protest attacking Corbyn outside parliament on Monday (see right) also want to appeal to racist “concerns” about migrants.

John Mann—Labour’s most vocal anti-immigration MP—astonishingly dared to claim, “We stand against racism.”

Fighting antisemitism can’t be separated from the fight against all other forms of racism. Where antisemitism has grown recently, such as in eastern Europe, it’s done so on the back of attacks on Muslims, migrants and Roma people.

The people attacking Corbyn now are enemies of the anti-racist movement. They want to divide and weaken the left that has the best chance of building a movement that can challenge antisemitism.

Every concession to the argument that the left is to blame for antisemitism makes it easier for them to do that.



THE RALLY on Monday night

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

Right wing Labour MPs join a rally to undermine Corbyn

TWO MAJOR organisations, the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Jewish Leadership Council, attacked Jeremy Corbyn in front of a crowd of hundreds outside parliament on Monday.

A large number of right wing Labour politicians—mainly Corbyn’s most vocal opponents—also joined the rally along with some Tory MPs.

They said that antisemitism had become rife inside the party since Corbyn’s election as leader—a claim used to undermine him and the left.

It follows revelations that Corbyn appeared to defend an antisemitic mural, which was due to be removed, in 2012. He apologised last week, claiming not to have looked closely at a picture of the mural on Facebook.

Letter

He apologised again in a letter to the Board of Deputies and the Jewish Leadership Council on Monday.

The letter said, “Prejudice and hatred of Jewish people has no place whatsoever in the Labour Party, and every one of us has a responsibility to ensure it is never allowed to fester in our society again.”

“I will never be anything other than a militant opponent of antisemitism.”

Yet speakers at the protest last night accused Corbyn—a lifelong anti-racist—of

encouraging antisemitism. Referring to the period since Corbyn became Labour leader, Board of Deputies president Jonathan Arkush said, “Time and time again Jeremy Corbyn and those close to his leadership have failed to take action on antisemitism.”

“This has created a space for racists inside the Labour Party.”

Protest organisers read out a long list of Labour MPs who joined the rally.

Most have recently called for tougher immigration



John Mann

controls to appeal to racist “concerns” about migrants.

John Mann—one of Labour’s most vocal anti-immigration MPs—said, “We stand against discrimination. We stand against racism.”

Yet last year Mann blamed “foreign labour” for poor pay and working conditions.

Labour speakers explicitly linked their presence on the protest to their fight against the left inside Labour.

MP Wes Streeting said, “They can threaten us with deselection. We will never be cowed into silence by Momentum members.”

Claire Kober, who stepped down as leader of Haringey council after a backlash against attempts to bulldoze council housing, also accused left wing activists of being motivated by antisemitism.

A number of Jewish Labour members and supporters hit back at claims of antisemitism—rightly pointing to the growth of the far right behind the rise in antisemitism.

Labour supporters’ group Jewish Voice for Labour (JVL) rallied outside parliament next to the protest that was attacking Corbyn.

JVL member Mike Cushman said, “There are Jews and friends of Jews who detest antisemitism and support Jeremy.”

“Many of us with Jewish heritage are fed up with being accused of antisemitism when we raise the

Ahed Tamimi is jailed

PALESTINIAN teenager Ahed Tamimi was sentenced to eight months in prison last week for standing up to an Israeli soldier.

Ahed was arrested after slapping a soldier who had entered the yard in front of her house in the occupied West Bank.

Footage of the confrontation spread on the internet, gathering widespread support.

It was an inspiring act of defiance against a heavily armed enforcer of a military occupation that has lasted more than 50 years.

The same day that Ahed was convicted, Israeli soldier Elor Azaria had his sentence cut by a third.

Azaria was convicted of manslaughter after video showed him calmly shoot a man in the head as he lay on the floor.

Azaria will spend less time in prison than many Palestinian children do for throwing stones.

Newham victories show we can beat academies and the cuts

Defeats for academy plans in east London, strikes against cuts in Birmingham, and a march in Salford to save nurseries are all signs of a fight against the Tories—and Labour councils

by MIRIAM SCHARF

PARENTS, TEACHERS and campaigners in Newham, east London, are celebrating. They heard last week that, after a series of strikes and protests, the governing board of Keir Hardie school had voted not to proceed with academisation.

Further strikes had been planned for later in April to force the school's governors to hold a ballot on the plans. It's another sign that resistance can win.

Campaigners across Newham have been told again and again that, "It's a done deal", or, "They'll never listen to you".

But the case against academisation has grown stronger as academies fail, as companies holding school contracts collapse, and as evidence mounts that they are not good for education.

The campaign in Labour-run Newham had scored another victory earlier last week at the Royal Courts of Justice.

Transfer

Parents at Avenue primary school challenged the lack of meaningful consultation over a proposal to transfer to academy status.

Strikers and supporters cheered as parents emerged to explain that the judge criticised the consultants and employers, and granted parents permission to proceed towards the next stage.

The NEU union said the funding agreement that was due to be signed is now on hold. The next governing body meeting cannot vote to proceed to academy transfer.

This success is due to the determination of parents, the 13 days of solid strikes and the 100-strong pickets of strikers, parent and supporters at the school.

It was aided by strikes at the other schools—Cumberland and Keir Hardie.

And Brampton Primary has done a complete U-turn from its plans to academise.

Parents have received a letter which said, "At the present time it will continue to be a maintained school under the local authority."

This is a victory for the union members and the parents who had started to mobilise for significant opposition.



TEACHERS AND parents have united in militant campaigns

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

Before the campaign started schools in Newham had become academies, often with no resistance from staff or parents.

That has all changed. Any school threatening to academise now knows it will face opposition from staff and parents.

Academise

NEU members at Cumberland school are becoming even stronger in their commitment not to academise as they realise this model excludes students with special needs.

One parent, Alicia, at the picket line on 21 March praised the support at the school for her child and the progress he had made at Cumberland.

She said, "I fought very hard for my child to be in the mainstream and I am not prepared to see him sent to a Special School."

Birmingham home carers strike for jobs and service

BIRMINGHAM HOME care workers struck last Saturday in their fight against attacks to their service.

They are campaigning against plans by the Labour council to introduce split shifts that would damage the service they are able to provide.

Over 200 workers in the home enablement team had also walked out on 20 January and 6 February.

Previously members of the home enablement team had struck for several hours, but the latest action lasted all day.

Unison union members held campaigning stalls around Birmingham, encouraging the public to write to their MP and support the strike.

They were not able to hold a city-centre rally because of the Football Lads Alliance demonstrations.

Speaking ahead of the strike, Unison rep Mandy Buckley said the home carers were "very determined" to fight.

Further strikes are planned for April. Sarah Bates

SALFORD

Big march to save five nurseries

OVER 1,000 people marched to save five nurseries run by Salford's Labour-run council in Greater Manchester last Saturday.

The demonstration of nursery workers, parents and children, supported by community activists, was lively and determined.

Shadow education secretary Angela Rayner and the three Salford MPs addressed the rally. The Salford mayor wore the



Angela Rayner spoke at the demo

campaign T-shirt, telling the crowd that Salford council has lost 50 percent of its budget due to Tory austerity.

The strongest and most militant speeches came from nursery workers and parents who made it clear they would oppose any attempt to privatise their services and were willing to take the fight to the Tories.

The campaign was begun by Salford City Unison, which represents the nursery workers. It has held weekly meetings that brought together union reps, parents, Labour councillors and the mayor.

Campaigners have met Jeremy Corbyn, who promised to raise a question at PMQs about Tory cuts to early years funding.

The campaign intends to take protests to parliament to coincide with this event.

The Labour council should halt any moves towards a consultation over closures, guarantee the future of all five nurseries, and fight hard to get money from the government.

Ameen Hadi, Salford Unison (pc)

Anti-gun demos rage at violent US society

Marches of hundreds of thousands of people show fury at racism, police and poverty, reports **Alistair Farrow**

HUGE PROTESTS took place across the US last week against mass shootings.

March For Our Lives events were held in some 800 towns and cities across the US, organised by students and young people.

Some 800,000 joined the march in Washington, DC—and 150,000 turned out in New York City.

About 40,000 people marched in Los Angeles, California. And tens of thousands marched in Parkland, Florida, where 17 people died at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School last month.

Thousands of students across the US walked out of school last Wednesday for 17 minutes—one minute for each pupil killed at Parkland.

People came on the protests because they wanted to change a society in which thousands die from gun violence every year.

Marjory Stoneman Douglas student Delaney Tarr said, “We are not here for bread crumbs, we’re here for real change.”

The Democratic Party wants to put itself at the head of the movement. Liberal media sources are keen to reinforce their message.

Implied

The New York Times newspaper reported that children were the driving force of the protests. But it implied they would not have happened without the “sophisticated, experienced organisational muscle” of “adults”.

Philanthropic organisations controlled by the rich were quick to claim credit for the massive turnouts because they had funded coaches and planes. But people came on protests across the country, not just in Washington. And they came for reasons that weren’t dictated by the rich and the powerful.

One of the noticeable features was that protesters’ demands were not limited to ending school shootings, but against the militarisation of everyday life in the US.

Cops kill people with impunity,

BACK STORY

Students in the US began to organise after a mass shooting earlier this year

● Some 17 people were killed at the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, in February

● Students from the school organised protests demanding gun controls

● Students from other schools organised protests in solidarity

● There have since been mass student walkouts across the US

as happened in the case of Stephen Clark in Sacramento, California, last week. Officers shot at him 20 times for the “crime” of being in his grandparents’ back garden.

People protested because they were furious at a racist president who boasts about sexually assaulting women and responds to school shootings with calls to arm teachers.

On the Washington march Edna Chavez from Los Angeles said people marching were for “changing the conditions that foster violence.”

She talked about how her brother was killed outside their home in 2007. “This is normal—normal to the point that I learned to duck from bullets before I learned how to read,” she said.

There have been horrific mass shootings in schools before. The response to the Parkland killings has been far greater than the response to any of those which came previously.

The protests have tapped into the huge anger at the heart of US society.

That anger must stay on the streets—and target the culprits in the White House, the military bunkers, the boardrooms and the police stations.



On other pages...

Janet Alder—‘Hold cops to account over deaths in custody’ >>Page 17

Denmark



PUBLIC SECTOR trade unions held a giant shop stewards’ meeting last week

Workers gear up for massive pay fight

by **CHARLIE LYWOOD** from the International Socialists in Denmark

AROUND 10,000 shop stewards met last week in Denmark as a major confrontation looms.

Some 500,000 public workers might be on strike or locked out in April. They want a substantial pay rise—particularly for the lower paid—that would reflect wage improvements in the private sector.

In addition they want to stop employers hacking away at some of the hard won gains workers have achieved such as paid lunches.

In reality most health and education workers are on-call

during their lunch breaks.

Finally the unions demand that the teachers no longer have their work conditions decided by law but by negotiation.

The government and local authorities refused all of these things.

Many believe this will lead to the government stopping the dispute by law and dictating an agreement.

This would mean that no strikes could then receive direct help from unions’ strike funds as that would be illegal and their assets would then be impounded.

When the unions announced strikes for 60,000 workers, the employers announced a lock out

for almost ten times that. This means if no agreement is made, Denmark will be more or less paralysed in April.

Denmark has been plagued for years by a right wing government that uses racism to deflect attention from its tax cuts for the rich and its assaults on welfare.

Socialists are arguing for solidarity between public and private sector workers as the former look after the latter’s children and older people.

There is a very militant mood among public sector workers and there is no telling what will happen. These strikes create the possibility of a change in mood against the government.

Fury as Catalan leader arrested in Scotland

SCOTTISH NATIONAL Party (SNP) leader Nicola Sturgeon has exposed her government’s fake radicalism by cooperating with the clampdown on Catalan independence.

An international arrest warrant for exiled former Catalan education minister Clara Ponsati, who recently arrived in Scotland, was reactivated by the Spanish state last weekend.

The arrest coincided with that of former Catalan president Carles Puigdemont. He was arrested in Germany on Sunday and is set to be returned to face very serious

charges in Spain.

Thousands of people protested in Barcelona in response to Puigdemont’s arrest.

Sturgeon said her government “strongly opposed” the arrest and imprisonment of Catalan leaders.

But the SNP government won’t obstruct the rule of law. Sturgeon insisted, “Our justice system is legally obliged to follow due process” and that “Scottish ministers have no powers to intervene”.

Despite sympathy for Catalonia among Scotland’s

independence movement and the SNP membership, the Scottish government won’t do anything concrete to defend Catalan democracy.

Perhaps the SNP leadership values securing favourable trading terms with the European Union more than international solidarity.

It is shameful that the SNP government has remained largely silent. It could and should have done more in response to state sponsored violence and increasing repression of Catalan society.

Raymie Kiernan

Richard Buckwell
Nottingham

STRIKES ARE on the minds of workers in Donald Trump's United States. After decades of stagnating wages and rocketing living costs, they are back on the cards as a way of winning real gains at work.

An inspirational fight by West Virginia teachers over pay and health insurance payments has inspired teachers and other public sector workers. And walkouts are taking place in states where public sector workers are not allowed

to strike—New Jersey and West Virginia are just two examples.

Teachers in Oklahoma were set to strike from 2 April—and workers in other states could join them.

Where the strike wave goes next depends on workers maintaining the independent organisation that has pushed for strikes and won. They have raised the possibility of the US working class as a collective force moving into the fight against Trump and the bosses.

Alistair Farrow reports

Oklahoma “Most of the teachers I know are saying ‘no way!’”

TEACHERS AND other public sector workers in Oklahoma are set to walk out indefinitely next month. “We’re starting on 2 April and not ending until our demands are met,” Alberto Morejon told Socialist Worker.

Alberto is the administrator of the Oklahoma Teacher Walkout—The Time Is Now! page on Facebook, which was set up to help organise the strikes. Over 30,000 people joined the group in the first three days of March. Now it has over 70,000 members and is still growing.

By some measures, teachers in Oklahoma are the lowest-paid of any US state. Starting pay for a teacher there is £21,000 a year. And teachers haven’t had a pay rise in ten years.

They are demanding a £7,000 raise over three years, with £4,000 this year.

The state legislature proposed a deal to teaching unions last Tuesday. It included a £3,500 raise for teachers, smaller raises for support workers and other public sector workers, £53 million for school supplies and £175 million for public sector workers’ health insurance.

The reaction to the deal has been explosive.

“Most of the teachers I know are saying ‘No way!’,” teacher Heidi told Socialist Worker.

“The people in my building are planning to walk out and to be at the government Capitol building until they pass something that funds education. It must include not only materials and operating costs, but teachers and support staff.

“We are also pushing for funding for all state employees. For me those agencies and people are part of educating our children.”

Teachers and supporters have rightly pointed out that if they can



Mass meeting of strikers in Kentucky

New Jersey

SOME 4,000 education workers in New Jersey have been forced back to work in a deal hatched by their union leaders and bosses.

They were striking against proposed changes to their healthcare plan which would have seen them pay as much as 35 percent of insurance premiums.

Teachers currently pay around £1,000 a month in premiums. It will also mean new starters get worse pensions.

The US National Education Union told teachers to go back to work without telling them the content of the deal—and with no mention of a vote on it.

get half of what they want without striking, then why stop short of strikes?

There are 210 teachers in Jimmy Acevedo’s isolated north western district of Texas County. Some 80 percent of them voted for the strikes.

Jimmy told Socialist Worker, “The energy and excitement are high because the frustration and

limitations have been endured for a long time.

“We have met on weekends, after school, and between jobs—many of us have more than one.

“This is all new to us, but we are determined to not let this opportunity pass. We recognise the advantage of the growing momentum and understand that it is now or never.

“We are all hoping for a fast resolution. But we have been making contingency plans for travel, accommodation, food, care for our own families, students and responsibilities here at home.”

As with the West Virginia strike, right wing politicians and the media are trying to split support for the strike by focusing on the impact on students.

The Oklahoma Education Association union leadership has tried to hamper the strikes, initially suggesting 23 April for the walkout. They were forced to back down by members and moved the strike forward to 2 April.

And the votes to walk out have been so overwhelming, the right wing campaign has had little effect.

The strike plans have received

support from parents, but also limited support from the boards of education in districts. These are elected bodies which decide on education policy at a district level.

Alberto explained, “School districts have had board meetings to approve the strikes. All ten of the largest school districts in Oklahoma now support strikes.”

In just one example, under pressure from teachers the board of education for John Rex Charter Elementary voted on Monday to support the strike, but only for the first five days.

Strikers will have to maintain the independent organisation which has got them this far. But school and district administrations backing strikes is a sign of just how bad the situation is for public education in Oklahoma—and across the US. School districts backed strikes in West Virginia too (see right).

“I can’t tell you how many West Virginia teachers have messaged me saying, keep going you guys can do it, we support you,” said Alberto. “I’ve had Arizona teachers asking me for advice.”

The fight over pay and healthcare costs in West Virginia has inspired people across the US to stand up and fight back.

An insurgent movement has sent union bureaucrats, bosses and politicians scrambling in an attempt to contain it. Now the future of that movement hangs in the balance.



Welcome to
Strike Country



TEACHERS AND parents in Arizona have worked together in a #REDforED campaign highlighting the low pay for teachers and the state’s appalling level of spending on education. These teachers at Longview Elementary school are among many groups who have carried forward a message of solidarity and unity

PICTURE:TARA LA O GARCIA

Arizona “Teachers have been organising unofficial strikes called ‘sick outs!’”

TEACHERS IN Arizona were preparing for mass protests from this week. Thousands came to work wearing red T-shirts on several days in March to highlight low pay.

It was partly coordinated through the Arizona Educators United (AEU) Facebook page which now has over 30,000 users.

People are holding meetings and pressuring boards of education. They then contact the Facebook group’s administrators to let them know the results and this is shared.

As of last Wednesday some 70 percent of schools in the state had been recorded as closed from 2 April onwards.

The state legislature has offered teachers and other staff a paltry 1 percent pay rise.

Meanwhile state spending per pupil has dropped by 36.5 percent between 2008 and 2015.

Workers have been coordinating

unofficial strikes by calling in sick—called “sick outs”.

Teachers have picketed the state governor on radio shows and held meetings at dozens of schools across the state.

“We want to have events occurring as frequently as possible. We want to close the gap and keep the momentum building,” Rebecca Garelli told the Labor Notes website. “We have to keep people engaged and involved.”

“Our backs are against the wall—we have nothing else,” said teacher Noah Karvelis from AEU.

Puerto Rico

TEACHERS IN Puerto Rico struck on Monday last week against attempts to use the devastation caused by Hurricane Maria to expand private schooling.

The governor Ricardo Rocco wants to close 300 public schools and axe some 7,000 teaching jobs.

Pennsylvania

TEACHERS IN a Pennsylvania school district are on strike for pay rises and lower health care costs.

There are 168 teachers in the South Butler school district.

They have been ordered back to work by 3 April or face fines and penalties.

Mass meeting of striking educators in West Virginia (right)



Kentucky

THOUSANDS OF teachers protested outside the state Capitol building last Wednesday. They voted to strike at a mass meeting.

They are fighting plans to cut planned pension rises from 1.5 percent to 1 percent.

The plans would leave them down over £40,000 on average over the course of a lifetime.

The same state budget also includes a proposal to drain the state employees’ health insurance programme of funds. This means workers could see their contributions rise by 50 percent by 2020.

Teachers have been holding regular protests at the Capitol building. And now they are preparing for strikes.

West Virginia “It seems like we started a revolution”

AROUND 33,000 people struck in West Virginia over pay and health insurance in February.

West Virginia teacher Virginia Faulkner Hicks spoke to Socialist Worker about the strike.

“Years ago it was promised that a starting teacher’s wage in West Virginia would be £30,000 by 2019,” she said. “Well, its 2018 and, with the 5 percent raise it’s only up to £25,000, so we are way off that original plan.”

While strikers didn’t win over healthcare, they fought bosses to a standstill over pay, despite the best efforts of their union leadership.

“But, taking into account what we asked for at the beginning of the strike, we’re quite pleased with a 5 percent raise,” she said. “And it’s 5 percent for all state employees too.”

The American Federation of Teachers-West Virginia (AFT-WV), the West Virginia Education Association (WVEA), and the West Virginia School Service Personnel Association (WVSSPA) reached the deal.

“We are still hopeful that the insurance programme will get fixed,” said Virginia. “A task force has been set up.

“We had some say in who was on it. We forced them to add some women.

“And everything, such as insurance premium increases, has been frozen for 18 months until they can come up with an alternative funding source.

“It’s not fantastic but it’s a start.”

Virginia told Socialist Worker that workers are sceptical about the prospects of bosses keeping to their words. That scepticism can go in a number of directions.

She said, “I think another strike is very possible if the healthcare situation isn’t sorted out within the next couple of years.”

And teachers in the state recognise their achievement in acting as a spark to the current strike wave.

“Now Oklahoma has followed suit, as have parts of New Jersey,” said Virginia. “It seems like we started a revolution.

“If anything influenced us it was the West Virginia teachers’ strike of 1990. Many current West Virginia teachers were also teaching in 1990.”

Then teachers struck for 11 days and won a £3,500 pay rise.

Virginia spoke about how teachers “were blamed for being selfish and preventing our students from getting breakfast and lunch at school while we were striking”.

“So we set up public food banks throughout West Virginia,” she said.

“We also had a lot of support from parents and very few negative comments. Several parents joined us in the protests.

“In the end I think as far as public sympathy went we always felt more positivity than negativity.”

The West Virginia example proves that workers can fight off bosses’ attacks if they strike.

Crucially, West Virginia has popularised the idea of militant strikes—often in defiance of union bosses.

Send messages of solidarity to teachers and other workers in the United States fighting for decent pay, conditions and healthcare. You can send solidarity to teachers in Arizona via bit.ly/ArizonaSolidarity Send messages of support to teachers in Oklahoma via bit.ly/OklahomaSolidarity

WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests. We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to www.swp.org.uk

{ SOCIALIST WORKER } PUBLIC MEETINGS

BIRMINGHAM: CITY CENTRE

A Rebel's Guide to Martin Luther King book launch

Wed 25 Apr, 7pm,
The Priory Rooms,
Quaker Meeting House,
40 Bull St,
B4 6AF

EDINBURGH

A Rebel's Guide to Martin Luther King book launch

Wed 25 Apr, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
7 Victoria St,
EH1 2JL

GLASGOW

A Rebel's Guide to Martin Luther King book launch

Sat 21 Apr, 4pm,
SoulSa Café,
87 Glassford St,
G1 1UH
With author Yuri Prasad

HARLOW

A Rebel's Guide to Martin Luther King book launch

Thu 12 Apr, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
1 Church Leys,
Harlow,
CM18 6BX

LONDON: HACKNEY

A Rebel's Guide to Martin Luther King book launch

Thu 19 Apr, 7.30pm,
The Round Chapel,
2 Powerscroft Rd,
E5 0PU

LONDON: HARINGEY

A Rebel's Guide to Martin Luther King book launch

Wed 18 Apr, 7.30pm,
St John Vianney Church Hall,
386 West Green Rd,
N15 3QH
With author Yuri Prasad

LONDON: ISLINGTON

A Rebel's Guide to Martin Luther King book launch

Wed 18 Apr, 7pm,
El Rincon Quiteño,
235 Holloway Rd,
N7 8HG



MANCHESTER: CENTRAL

A Rebel's Guide to Martin Luther King book launch

Thu 19 Apr, 7pm,
Friends Meeting House,
6 Mount St,
M2 5NS

NEWCASTLE

A Rebel's Guide to Martin Luther King book launch

Thu 19 Apr, 7pm,
Mining Institute,
Neville Hall,
Westgate Road,
NE1 1SE

SHEFFIELD: CITY CENTRE

A Rebel's Guide to Martin Luther King book launch

Sat 21 Apr, 7pm,
Central United Reformed Church,
60 Norfolk St,
(near Crucible Theatre),
S1 2JB

SWANSEA

A Rebel's Guide to Martin Luther King book launch

Sat 7 Apr, 7pm,
Britpop Cafe,
30 Cradock St,
SA1 3EP

SOCIALIST WORKER PUBLIC MEETINGS

Is there a new Cold War? Spies, lies and state control

ABERDEEN

Wed 4 Apr, 6pm,
Belmont Cinema Cafe,
49 Belmont St,
AB10 1JS

LONDON: HACKNEY

Thu 5 Apr, 7.30pm,
The Round Chapel, 2
Powerscroft Rd (corner
Lower Clapton Rd), E5 0PU

OXFORD

Wed 4 Apr, 7.30pm,
Restore, Manzil Way
(off Cowley Rd),
OX4 1YH

PORTSMOUTH

Wed 4 Apr, 7.30pm,
Somerstown
Community Centre,
River's St, P05 4EZ

{ SOCIALIST WORKER } { BRANCH MEETINGS }

Weekly meetings to discuss political issues and our local interventions. All welcome.

BARNSELY

Politics of the mind — Marxism and mental distress

Wed 5 Apr, 7pm,
YMCA, Blucher St, S70 1AP

BIRMINGHAM: CITY CENTRE

1968 — when students and workers fought back

Wed 2 May, 7pm,
The Priory Rooms,
Quaker Meeting House,
40 Bull St, B4 6AF

BOLTON

Marxism and mental distress

Wed 4 Apr, 7pm,
Bolton Socialist Club,
16 Wood St (off
Bradshawgate), BL1 1DY

BRADFORD

A Rebel's Guide to Martin Luther King

Thu 5 Apr, 7pm,
Glyde House, Little
Horton Lane (opposite
the ice rink), BD5 0BQ

BRISTOL

Trotsky and the united front

Wed 4 Apr, 7.30pm,
YHA, 14 Narrow
Quay, BS1 4QA

BURNLEY AND PENDLE

Are robots after your job?

Wed 4 Apr, 7.30pm,
Red Triangle Cafe,
160 St James's St,
BB11 1NR

CHESTERFIELD

Why did the right make gains in the Italian elections?

Thu 5 Apr, 7.30pm,
Chesterfield Library, New
Beetwell St, S40 1QN

DONCASTER

A Rebel's Guide to Martin Luther King

Thu 4 Apr, 7.30pm,
5 Princes St, DN1 3NJ

DUNDEE

How do ideas change?

Wed 4 Apr, 7.30pm,
Dundee Voluntary Action,
10 Constitution Rd,
DD1 1LL

EDINBURGH

Going beyond the binary — Marxism, gender and trans liberation

Wed 4 Apr, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
7 Victoria St, EH1 2JL

EXETER

Fight for women's liberation today

Sat 31 Mar, 2pm,
Exeter Community Centre,
17 St. Davids Hill, EX4 3RG

HUDDERSFIELD

How did women win the vote?

Wed 4 Apr, 6.30pm,
Brian Jackson House, 2 New
North Parade (near both train
and bus stations), HD1 5JP

LEEDS: CITY CENTRE

Transphobia and women's rights — what do socialists say?

Thu 5 Apr, 7pm,
The Swarthmore Education
Centre, 2-7 Woodhouse
Sq, LS3 1AD

LIVERPOOL

How can we stop the rise of the far right across Europe?

Wed 11 Apr, 7pm,
Friends Meeting House,
22 School Ln,
L1 3BT

LONDON: HARINGEY

No borders! Why immigration controls are racist

Wed 4 Apr, 7.30pm,
St John Vianney Church Hall,
386 West Green Rd
(corner Vincent Rd),
N15 3QH

LONDON: ISLINGTON

Going beyond the binary — Marxism, gender and trans liberation

Mon 9 Apr, 7pm,
INCA CGIL UK, 124
Canonbury Rd, N1 2UT

LONDON: TOWER HAMLETS

Should socialists defend free speech?

Wed 4 Apr, 7pm,
Oxford House, Derbyshire
St (opposite Bethnal
Green Rd Tesco),
E2 6HG

LONDON: WALTHAM FOREST

The true face of Winston Churchill

Wed 4 Apr, 7.30pm,
William Morris Community
Centre, 6-8 Greenleaf Rd,
E17 6QQ

MANCHESTER: CENTRAL

Turkey, Syria and the Kurds

Wed 4 Apr, 7pm,
Friends Meeting House,
6 Mount St,
M2 5NS

NEWCASTLE

Imperialism in the Middle East — what is happening in Afrin?

Thu 5 Apr, 7pm,
Commercial Union House,
39 Pilgrim St,
NE1 6QE

NORWICH

Who was the real Lenin?

Thu 12 Apr, 7.30pm,
Vauxhall Centre,
Johnson Place,
NR2 2SA

SHEFFIELD: CITY CENTRE

Do socialists defend free speech?

Thu 5 Apr, 7pm,
Central United Reformed
Church, 60 Norfolk St (near
Crucible Theatre), S1 2JB

TELFORD

Fighting the pay cap — how do we win?

Wed 18 Apr, 7.30pm,
Carriages, The Parade,
Wellington, TF1 1PY

WIGAN

Why did the right make gains in the Italian elections?

Thu 5 Apr, 7pm,
Little Fifteen pub, 17-19
Wallgate (opposite Wigan
Post Office), WN1 1LD

WOLVERHAMPTON & WALSALL

Why did the right make gains in the Italian elections?

Wed 4 Apr, 7.30pm,
Wild Bytes Cafe, Darlington
St, WV1 4HW

YORK

A Rebel's Guide to Martin Luther King

Wed 4 Apr, 7.30pm,
Sea Horse Hotel,
4 Fawcett St,
YO10 4AH

{ MOVEMENT EVENTS }

DORSET SOCIALISTS

A Rebel's Guide to Martin Luther King

Sat 14 Apr, 1.30pm,
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Park, DT1 1XJ

LONDON

Marx@200

Sat 19 May, 1-6pm,
Birkbeck, University of
London, Malet St, Bloomsbury,
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Collidwell, Joseph Choonara
and Sally Campbell

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marxismfestival.org.uk

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Ready Player One a nostalgic homage to culture of 1980s

Spielberg's latest blockbuster is designed to take people on a nostalgia trip back to the 1980s. But **Sasha Simic** says that it doesn't quite hit the mark

IT'S 2045. Teenager Wade Owen Watts (Tye Sheridan) lives with his aunt in the bleak, post-catastrophic dystopia of Columbus. Most people exist in cramped, rusting shipping containers bolted together into rickety sky-scrappers.

Faced with such a squalid reality most people choose to escape into the immersive, virtual world of Oasis (Ontologically Anthropocentric Sensory Immersive Simulation).

Here they can lead exciting lives playing interactive games in cyberspace in whatever exotic forms they choose to adopt.

The Marxist poet Bertolt Brecht described escapist fiction as "the bourgeois narcotics factory" designed to stifle critical thinking and social progress. Oasis is that factory on a colossal scale.

Built by the socially awkward Halliday (Mark Rylance), Oasis is open to anyone who can afford the tech to access it.

Just before his death Halliday hides three keys in Oasis. The player who finds them will inherit control of the virtual universe—now far more important to humanity than reality.

Competitor

Wade and a group of fellow misfits he meets in Oasis make good progress in the quest for the keys. But so does Nolan Sorrento (Ben Mendelsohn) evil head of the IOI Corporation and Halliday's chief competitor.

The fight is on for Oasis—but is the struggle best fought in cyberspace or in the real world?

This is a visually stunning film which celebrates the enduring power of geek culture. The screen is so often crammed with well-known characters that it can be a bit overwhelming.

There's a special effort to target the 1980s generation who grew up in the period of Spielberg's greatest successes such as *ET* and *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. The soundtrack is dominated by the music of the period.

The very earliest days of computer gaming are resurrected. There is an extended sequence which recreates scenes from one of the 80s' most iconic films in extraordinary and unnecessary detail.

How much you'll enjoy this film depends on how much you enjoy Spielberg's work.

He's always been a great storyteller but there's a lot of his characteristic sentimentality here. And the film's ending is absurd.

The geeks have inherited the world and Spielberg played a big part in making it so—however much he might regret that now.

Ready Player One is on general release

Cycling



JAKE IN Shoreditch, east London

The cyclists taking back London's streets

SWERVING IN and out of traffic in a pack of 3,000 cyclists may not sound like everyone's idea of a good time, but it is for Jake.

The Bikestormz cycling movement has brought thousands of cyclists onto the streets of London. Jake, known as Jake100 on social media, is a cofounding member along with Mac and Don Trappy.

It's part of a wider Bike Life movement which includes motorbike riders and BMXers.

"I'm part of a team called Street Elite," Jake told *Socialist Worker*. "It's hard to say how many people are involved. On one of the ride outs we had 2,000 to 3,000 riders."

The popularity of the sport has skyrocketed and now Jake has over 50,000 followers on Instagram and 20,000 subscribers on his YouTube account.

Sports companies have started offering sponsorships to promote their products. Despite this interest Jake insists the sport remains open to everyone.

"All you need is a bike," he said.

"You can do tricks on any bike.

"It's not focused on competition so much. Everyone just pushes each other and tries to create their own style.

"There's no rivalry or anything like that."

Social media plays a key role in the movement by linking up people who otherwise wouldn't be in contact.

Involved

Jake said, "There are people from across the whole country involved. We stay in touch over Instagram and other forms of social media. Pretty much everyone I ride with isn't from my area."

"I'm from near Stratford and the riders I ride with the most are from north and east London."

Dozens, hundreds, or even thousands of people taking over whole streets in central London on bikes is a dramatic way to reclaim public space from private transport.

"There's a whole deeper meaning to what we do," said

Jake, pointing out that it's not just about doing tricks. One of the slogans of the movement is "KnivesDownBikesUp".

"There's not a lot for the youth in London really," he said. "If you play football or one of the mainstream sports there are things you can go and do. But if you have other interests there aren't really the facilities, and the same if you don't have the money for your interests."

"People want to go out and have an adventure. They want to go out and see new things about the city—I see new things every time I go out. It's a whole new experience."

"It attracts a lot of people because they want the feeling of belonging to something. When you come down to a meet up you can chat to anyone there, you belong to a whole family and a movement."

"We just want the freedom to explore the city."

Alistair Farrow

Follow Jake on Instagram and Youtube at bit.ly/jakecycle and bit.ly/JakeYTube

THEATRE

FRANKENSTEIN

at the Royal Exchange, Manchester, until 14 April. For tickets, go to bit.ly/frankREM

READERS OF *Socialist Worker* probably aren't avid readers of *The Sun* newspaper. If they were they may have seen that a couple of weeks ago it was irate at "snowflake students complaining that Frankenstein's monster was misunderstood".

I hope *The Sun* sent someone to review this play because they would have been apoplectic.

Unlike *The Sun*, the play's creators have actually understood the point of Mary Shelley's novel.

They have created a Frankenstein where the reasons for the monster's actions are explored, as opposed to just presenting him as a mindless killing



Shane Zaza as Frankenstein

machine. The monster is rejected by society and by Frankenstein which leads him to become the monster everyone already thinks he is. It is compellingly and skilfully portrayed.

Call me a snowflake, but I felt pretty sorry for him.

The play also attempts to raise a question that comes up often in science fiction—"just because a scientist can do something, should they?"

As well as keeping to the central point the play pretty much follows the plot of the book. It's framed using Captain Walton, an explorer searching for the North Pole. He recounts the story through letters he's writing to his sister.

This does mean it drags in some places, but overall it works.

There are also plenty of moments to make the audience jump.

Elements of horror, science fiction and political allegory are blended together well. And above all we learn a valuable lesson—be nice to any dead people you may one day reanimate in your basement.

Bethan Turner



AFTER the massacre, the militias boasted to the press of how many Arabs they had killed.

The New York Times subsequently reported that 254 Arabs were killed in Deir Yassin—the Palestinian village wiped out 70 years ago in April.

That massacre has since come to symbolise all the crimes committed against the Palestinians in 1948.

It wasn't the only massacre that year—or even the biggest. But it was an early sign of what was in store for Palestinians. Over the coming months hundreds of thousands would be systematically cleared from their homes to make way for the new state of Israel.

For the people of Deir Yassin that happened just before dawn on Friday 9 April.

Two Jewish militias, The Irgun and the Lehi—or Stern Gang—attacked the village, thinking it an easy target. But they were met with fierce resistance.

That the Palestinians tried to defend themselves is sometimes used by Israel to excuse what happened next.

Jewish fighters made their way through the village house by house, throwing grenades into each one before entering and killing anyone still alive.

Captured villagers—many of them children and elderly people—were lined up and sprayed with machine gun fire. Families were mown down on their doorsteps.

A letter by a Lehi fighter—written at the time—breathlessly describes how “this was the first time in my life that at my hands and before my eyes Arabs fell.

“I killed an armed Arab man and two Arab girls of 16 or 17 who were helping the Arab who was shooting. I stood them against a wall and blasted them with two rounds from the Tommy gun”.

Commander

Despite denying a massacre ever took place, Lehi commander Yehoshua Zettler recently told filmmaker Neta Shoshani, “I won't tell you that we were there with kid gloves on. They ran like cats.

“House after house we were putting in explosives and they are running away. An explosion and move on, an explosion and move on and within a few hours, half the village isn't there anymore.”

Once the killing had stopped, bodies were piled up and burned. A group of 25 men and boys were forced into trucks and paraded through Jerusalem, then taken to a quarry and murdered.

When Mordechai Gichon—an officer from Jewish army the Haganah—arrived at the



Palestinians flee Israeli terror during the Nakba or 'catastrophe' in 1948

DEIR YASSIN —ISRAEL'S MASSACRE

Nick Clark tells the story of Deir Yassin, the Palestinian village where Zionist gangs killed over a hundred people in 1948 to clear the way for the founding of the Israeli state



Zionist militias forced out hundreds of thousands of people

village, the scene reminded him of the persecution Jews faced in 19th century Russia.

“If you are coming into a civilian locale and dead people are scattered around in it—then it looks like a pogrom,” he said decades later.

“When the Cossacks burst into Jewish neighbourhoods, then that should have looked something like this.”

One Israeli version of this story tries desperately to absolve the attackers of guilt.

Apologists tell of how the militias left open an escape route for villagers to flee the attack.

Or how they “evacuated”—forcibly removed—some of those who couldn't run.

Yet the version told by those who carried out the attack revelled in the horror they had brought—even inflating the scale of the atrocity.

The true number of Palestinians killed is probably closer to 110.

The first higher estimates

came from the attackers themselves.

The two lies have the same purpose. Attackers allowed Palestinians to flee because they wanted to empty the village of Arabs.

They killed as many as possible to encourage Arabs in other villages to flee too.

It was part of a plan to systematically empty Palestinian towns, villages and cities of Arabs.

A few months earlier in November 1947 the United Nations (UN) passed a resolution to divide Palestine.

Many tens of thousands of Jews had recently arrived in Palestine after escaping the industrial-scale slaughter of the Nazi Holocaust.

European Jews had already been living in colonies there since the end of the 19th century, often having fled antisemitic persecution.

But as socialist Tony Cliff, a Jew who was born and grew up in Palestine wrote, “The Jews were horribly oppressed but it didn't guarantee they became progressive or revolutionary.”

This colonial movement—Zionism—sought to build an exclusively Jewish state in all of Palestine.

The Palestinians already living there had to be made to leave. They looked for support from imperialist powers to help them do that.

Britain—which had occupied Palestine since the end of the First World War—supported the Zionists, who helped to police and repress the occupied Palestinians.

BUT NOW that Britain's empire was crumbling it could no longer keep on top of the violent forces it had helped to take root, and decided to leave.

The UN agreed to divide Palestine between the Arabs and the Jews. More than 50 percent of Palestine was “given” to the Jews, who were just a third of the population and occupied no more than 10 percent of the land.

But an exclusively Jewish state needed a Jewish majority.

Zionist leader David Ben Gurion, who became Israel's first prime minister, worried “There are 40 percent non-Jews in the areas allocated to the Jewish state.

“Such a demographic balance questions our ability to maintain Jewish sovereignty. Only a state with at least 80 percent Jews is a viable and stable state”.

Along with other Zionist leaders, Ben Gurion had drawn up a plan. Haganah intelligence officers collected detailed information on every Arab village and urban centre.

Areas of Palestine were divided into zones that were allocated to different Haganah battalions.

Every Palestinian village that

stood between isolated Jewish settlements in each zone had to be cleared of Arabs.

Where Arab villages had signed non-aggression pacts with neighbouring Jewish settlements—such as Deir Yassin—underground militias the Irgun and Lehi were tacitly allowed to take over.

As the clearances gathered pace, the Zionist leadership grew bolder and more enthusiastic.

“When I come now to Jerusalem I feel I am in a Jewish city,” Ben Gurion said in February.

“In many Arab neighbourhoods in the West you do not even see one Arab. I do not suppose it will change.

“And what happened in Jerusalem and Haifa can happen in large parts of the country.

Persist

“If we persist it is quite possible that in the next six or eight months there will be considerable changes in the country, very considerable and to our advantage”.

By March there was a solid plan—plan Dalet—that left no doubt about the fate of Arab villages.

“These operations should be carried out in the following manner: either by destroying villages (by setting fire to them, by blowing them up, and by planting mines in their rubble),” it said.

“In the case of resistance, the armed forces must be wiped out and the population expelled outside the borders of the state”.

Israeli historian Ilan Pappé labelled this plan for what it was—a blueprint for ethnic cleansing. Deir Yassin was among the first villages cleared under plan Dalet.

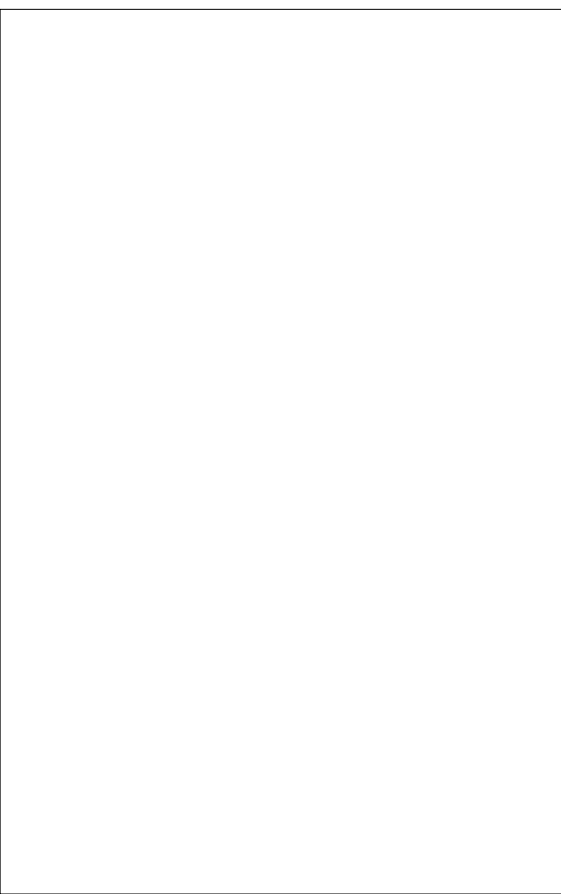
By that point at least 75,000 Palestinians had already become refugees—months before Britain had even left.

The British army in Palestine was twice the size of the Haganah and could have easily stopped the massacres.

Instead Britain allowed ethnic cleansing to take place in full view of its occupying forces.

It was days after the massacre that the British turned up in Deir Yassin—not far from capital Jerusalem—to investigate. One police officer had been sent but was blocked by the Haganah.

After the initial bragging, the Zionist forces now hoped to



THE village of Deir Yassin (above). And David Ben Gurion, one of Israel's founders and its first prime minister (below)

hide what they had done.

Even now the Israeli state makes sure that photos of the massacre stay locked in its military archives.

But the Haganah officer who took those photographs—Shraga Peled—remembers them vividly.

“When I got to Deir Yassin, the first thing I saw was a big tree to which a young Arab fellow was tied,” he recalls in Shoshani's film. “This tree was burnt in a fire. They had tied him to it and burned him. I photographed that”.

Where once they celebrated the massacre, now the Israeli establishment seeks to cover it up—and with good reason.

The groups that committed the massacre went on to form Israel's army.

Irgun commander Menachem Begin later became the Israeli prime minister.

The memory of Deir Yassin is an embarrassment for Israel—it reveals the horror from which that state was born.

READ MORE

● **The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine** by Ilan Pappé £12.99

● **Balfour's Shadow** by David Cronin £16.99

● **British Policy in Palestine** by Tony Cliff online at bit.ly/cliffPalestine

Available at Bookmarks, the socialist bookshop. Phone 020 7637 1848 or go to bookmarksbookshop.co.uk



COMMENT

Why celebrate Britain's murderous past in Africa?

The British army plundered Africa—now it wants us to celebrate, writes **Charlie Kimber**

AN EXHIBITION opens soon in London that glorifies murder and plunder.

It will celebrate 150 years since the Battle of Maqdala.

A British imperial army of 40,000 soldiers and other forces, armed with all the latest killing technology, slaughtered the forces of Ethiopia's Emperor Tewodros II.

The Victoria & Albert (V&A) museum claims it will demonstrate “the craftsmanship and beauty of the Maqdala treasures within the context of the collection's complex history”.

It's not complex. British forces crushed a group they regarded as “savages”, stole their most sacred objects and then sold them to museums, libraries and private collections.

The supposed justification for the invasion was a “humanitarian” mission to topple a dictator and free innocent captives.

Tewodros was holding a small group of British hostages.

Tewodros was a reformer and moderniser.

But he was a good target to show that anyone who obstructed the British imperial project would face bloody destruction.

Power

As the National Army Museum enthuses today, the invasion “demonstrated the enormous power of Britain in this era”.

The British force had been despatched from India under General Napier and had taken months to reach Tewodros' fortress.

The decisive battle saw two British killed—and around 700 Ethiopians.

As the citadel of Maqdala was stormed, Tewodros killed himself.

The geographer Clements Markham, an embedded chronicler, recalled Napier's men swarmed around

SOME OF the items looted by the British army

Tewodros' body. They “gave three cheers over it, as if it had been a dead fox and then began to pull and tear the clothes to pieces until it was nearly naked”.

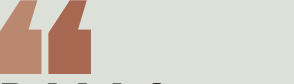
Journalist Henry M Stanley said the loot from Maqdala included “an infinite variety of gold, and silver and brass crosses”.

There were “heaps of parchment royally illuminated”. Other articles were “scattered in infinite bewilderment until they dotted the whole surface of the rocky citadel, the slopes of the hill and the entire road to the British camp two miles off”.

Maqdala was then set on fire, burning the emperor's palace and all other buildings, including the church of Medhane Alem.

The fire, reported one witness, “spread quickly from habitation to habitation and sent up a heavy cloud of dense smoke which could be seen for many miles”.

The items from Maqdala were transported, on 15 elephants and 200 mules,



British forces crushed a group and stole their most sacred objects

to the nearby Dalanta Plain where the British military authorities held a two-day auction.

The sell-off included two crowns, a golden chalice, ten altar slabs and a number of beautiful processional crosses which ended up at the V&A.

Two of the emperor's richly embroidered tents are now in the Museum of Mankind in London.

Pieces of Tewodros's hair went on display in London's National Army Museum.

Haul

Other parts of the haul are now in Edinburgh, Halifax and the Queen's personal collection in the Royal Library at Windsor Castle.

There have been numerous requests during the last 100 years from Ethiopian authorities for the treasure to be returned.

Nearly all have been arrogantly rebuffed.

Earlier this year the French historian Benedicte Savoy resigned from Berlin's Humboldt Forum in protest at the lack of attention to where exhibits had been stolen from.

“I want to know how much blood is dripping from each artwork,” she said.

There's no doubt about the gore surrounding the Ethiopian items displayed in London.

They should all be immediately returned to Ethiopia, full compensation paid, and be replaced with an exhibition about Britain's imperial crimes.

Labour MP's remarks fuelled racism

by SADIE ROBINSON

A RECENT report has shone a light on the impact of politicians' racism—and the deep disillusion that exists with the establishment.

The Just Yorkshire charity asked Asian people in Rotherham about comments made by their Labour MP Sarah Champion last August.

Champion wrote a piece in The Sun newspaper that claimed British Pakistani men posed a particular threat to white girls.

"For too long we have ignored the race of these abusers and, worse, tried to cover it up," she wrote.

Attack

"These people are predators and their common denominator is their ethnic heritage."

Her piece appeared exactly two years after 81 year old Mushin Ahmed was killed in a racist attack in Rotherham.

His murderers had called him a "groomer".

The charity has called for a Citizen's Jury to look at how the Rotherham child abuse



AN ANTI-RACIST protest in Rotherham in September 2015

PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER

scandal has affected racism and civil liberties.

Respondents to its survey said Champion's comments had increased racism in the South Yorkshire town.

Some 79 percent said her article had an impact on them. Many said they had

suffered more verbal abuse, threats, swearing and racist comments.

One woman said her sons had been called "rapist Pakis" at school the week that Champion's article was published.

"Sarah's article added fuel

and divided the community further," she said.

Some respondents had been called "groomers".

One man was "frightened to go out" as the article had "stirred racial tension".

Another had been "spat at on the street" while another

felt "stressed and vulnerable". One simply said, "Living is a nightmare."

Many respondents felt "disappointed", "let down" and "angry".

One woman said Champion had "given legitimacy" to bigots. Many said Champion's remarks were "racist".

Several pointed out that abusers come from all sections of society—and that it isn't only white girls who suffer abuse.

A number denounced Champion for choosing the right wing Sun newspaper to air her views in.

The survey also found widespread disillusion with the system in general.

When asked who people felt best represents their interests politically, more than 71 percent said "no one".

A couple of respondents said the Rotherham 12, a group of Asian men who fought charges after protesting against Nazis, spoke for them.

Mainstream politicians were held in low regard.

"I don't trust politicians," said one woman. "Council-

lors do nothing either."

"No one listens, they have their own agendas," added a man. Another said politicians are "never there unless it's elections".

One woman said of politicians, "All make promises but then don't deliver," while another said, "Nothing changes."

For another, aside from Jeremy Corbyn, she had "no faith in the current system at all".

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‘Hold cops to account over deaths in custody’

Twenty years after her brother Christopher Alder died, Janet Alder is still fighting for truth and justice

SUNDAY WILL mark 20 years since Christopher Alder was unlawfully killed in a Hull police station.

The Justice for Christopher Alder campaign will hold a commemoration protest on Saturday.

Christopher was involved in a fight at a nightclub in the early hours of 1 April 1998.

Police came to the hospital where he was being treated to interview him and arrested him.

He was conscious enough to talk briefly to a hospital security guard. Then he was manhandled into a police van.

His sister Janet told Socialist Worker that when Christopher arrived at the police station he was “totally unconscious”.

“His trousers and boxer shorts were down to his knees,” she said.

“He was dragged to the custody suite and put on the floor bleeding from his mouth.”

Footage

Christopher died in the custody suite of Queens Gardens Police Station. CCTV footage showed cops near to him, making monkey noises as he died.

An inquest in 2000 found that Christopher was unlawfully killed. No officer has been charged with crimes relating to his death.

Since then his family has been subjected to repeated humiliation at the hands of the police and the state.

“Without the support we’ve had from ordinary people I’d have been totally crushed,” said Janet. “I could never have done this on my own.”

“I took Christopher’s case to the European Court of Human Rights. When we got there, the government said his right to life had been denied.

“After that I thought, ‘I’ve done everything I possibly can. At least now they’ve had to acknowledge Christopher rather than view him as insignificant like all the other deaths in custody.’

“I thought it was time to get on with my life.”

BACK STORY

Christopher Alder died in a Hull police station on 1 April 1998

- An inquest in 2000 found that he had been unlawfully killed
- The van that Christopher was taken to the station in was cleaned hours after his death
- Bloodstains had been observed in the van and were removed
- No police officer has ever faced charges over Christopher’s death
- His sister Janet and the rest of his family continue to fight for justice

Instead Janet uncovered more injustices.

“We thought we’d buried Christopher in 2000,” she said. “But in 2011 it emerged that his body had laid in the mortuary for 11 years in six body bags.”

His family had buried the body of 77 year old Grace Kamara in his place.

South Yorkshire police set up an inquiry into the incident. Janet believes the way they conducted the inquiry was contemptuous of her and her family.

“They said they didn’t know who had swapped his body or when the swap had taken place,” said Janet.

“Then in 2011, I was told the police had spied on me during the inquest proceedings. It’s not just one injustice, we’re talking about three injustices.”

Janet said it’s the responsibility of all ordinary people to hold the cops to account.

“The number of people, particularly black men like Christopher, dying in police custody is unbelievable,” she said.

“Absolutely no one in authority has had the guts or the ethics to think about what’s been going on here. This has been such a stain on British society.”

March to remember Christopher Alder. Saturday 31 March, 1pm, Victoria Square, Hull HU1 3DX.



PROTESTERS gathered outside Yarl’s Wood detention centre in Bedfordshire last Saturday to show solidarity with detainees and demand an end to indefinite detention

PICTURES: STAND UP TO RACISM WALES/FACEBOOK

Women detainees in Yarl’s Wood call for an end to indefinite detention

by TOMÁŠ TENGELY-EVANS

WOMEN DETAINEES in Yarl’s Wood are demanding that the Home Office responds to their calls for an end to indefinite detention.

Theresa, a detainee from Uganda in east Africa, has been in the Bedfordshire immigration detention centre for over three months.

“I don’t know how long I’ll be here,” she told Socialist Worker.

“It’s that uncertainty that kills us every day. We’ve given the Home Office our demands to end indefinite detention, but they have not responded. They’ve failed to address them.”

The demand comes in the week that a House of Commons committee heard damning evidence of the plight of women at Yarl’s Wood.

There was testimony that “the majority of asylum-seeking women who are held in detention in Yarl’s Wood are survivors of rape or other forms of gender violence” and that in Yarl’s Wood there is a “clear sense of desperation”.

Theresa was one of 120

women who launched an all-out hunger strike calling for an end to indefinite detention last month.

She says most people in Yarl’s Wood detention centre are no longer on hunger strike.

“The mood is low among the detainees, but we’ve still got the same attitude of anger and dissatisfaction.”

Targets

Both the Home Office and the security guards, provided by outsourcing multinational Serco, worked hard to undermine hunger strikers’ morale.

Theresa said, “They just distance themselves from the policies and laws and regulations.

“As a hunger strike I had interviews where they’d say, ‘We don’t make the policies, we’re just doing our job following the guidelines’.

“They are playing with people’s lives—they’re hitting targets and you are just a number.”

Around 500 anti-racists protested outside Yarl’s Wood last Saturday.

Theresa said, “We heard that people were coming to protest outside. We were looking forward

to it because we need people out there voicing their concern.”

The Tories’ racist immigration policies are to blame for locking up migrants.

Theresa said, “Someone sits up there, whether it’s the prime minister or the home secretary, and decides how many Britain should have.”

She added, “The Home Office should close the detention centres down. Keeping people in here indefinitely like this is killing us.”

Labour’s shadow home secretary Diane Abbott has pledged to end indefinite detention.

Anti-racists should demand that a Labour government commits to end all deportations, shut down the detention centres and give all asylum seekers indefinite leave to remain.

We need a mass movement against racism that shows solidarity with the detainees and takes on the Tories.

Student Stand Up to Racism is taking a coach to Calais in France on Saturday 5 May to deliver solidarity and donations to the refugees in the area and support the work of charity Care4Calais. For details go to bit.ly/Calais5May

IN BRIEF

Estates not safe from developers

COUNCIL HOUSING estate regeneration projects will go ahead despite Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn's pledge that residents would get a vote on proposals.

London's Labour mayor Sadiq Khan had conceded ground to Corbyn and included the pledge in his Best Practice Guide to Estate Regeneration.

But a Freedom of Information request this month showed that "the requirement for ballots will not be retrospective".

That means councils will not have to ballot residents over regeneration projects which have already been signed off.

"Ballots also won't apply to schemes that already have full or outline planning permission," reads the reply from the Mayor of London's office.

Some 34 estates across London are exempt from the votes.

Daily Mail cleaners win the living wage

CLEANERS AT the Daily Mail newspaper's offices in Kensington, west London, have won their demands for a living wage after threatening to strike.

The cleaners' employers, outsourcing firm Mitie, has agreed to pay the London Living Wage of £10.20 from 1 April.

The pay rise is a 25 percent rise for the cleaners, all of whom are migrants.

Freedom Riders celebrate birthday

OVER 60 people joined the South Yorkshire Freedom Riders rally outside Sheffield train station on Monday.

They were celebrating the 4th anniversary of their campaign to win back free train travel for the elderly.

Speakers pointed out that the campaign has won a number of victories and continues to attract many supporters. Banners read, "We're not going away."

Messages of support were sent to RMT union members who were striking to keep guards on the train.

George Arthur

GMB union ballots Devon paramedics

THE GMB union is holding a consultative ballot of paramedics and other ambulance workers in Devon.

Workers have raised concerns around annual leave refusals, unfair and inconsistent rotas and pay. South Western ambulance bosses have also refused to recognise the GMB as a union at the workplace.

The ballot closes on Friday 13 April.

BUS WORKERS



DETERMINATION ON the bus workers' picket line in Aberdeen

Drivers vote to shift resistance up a gear

by GERARD McCABE

STRIKING BUS workers in Aberdeen voted unanimously to escalate their action at a mass meeting of over 150 people last Wednesday.

Around 250 Unite union members, who are fighting to defend their terms and conditions, plan to walk out for 28 days from Friday of next week.

It's the day that First Bus bosses have threatened to impose new contracts.

Voted

Workers voted by 95 percent to strike over the new contracts.

They would see some drivers work a 12-hour shift and drive for up to ten hours during that day. They would also cut holiday pay and

pensions. There would be more split shift working, which makes people work more frequently.

On the picket line drivers who had worked split shifts with other bus companies spoke about their impact.

They talked about the effect it had on their physical and mental health, and how badly it affected their family relationships.

The workers are now into the second week of strikes, having walked out for a further seven days on Sunday.

There has been a strong picket on all of the strike days, with lots of support from passing traffic and pedestrians and the local trades council and other unions.

Very few buses are leaving the depot and bosses are only able to run a few services.

Workers raised some concerns about the use of scab labour.

Scabs are thought to include some local drivers and an estimated 25 workers from outside Aberdeen.

Fuel

Workers were also concerned that a fuel tanker was allowed to leave the depot unchallenged.

On the picket lines one of the striking drivers commented on the support they had received from striking UCU university union members.

In Aberdeen the UCU picket line and the Unite picket were less than half a mile apart.

Every trade unionist should support the Aberdeen bus workers' fight.

● Send messages of support to @UniteScotland on Twitter

HOUSING

Grenfell survivors to wait a year for homes

SURVIVORS AND those displaced by the Grenfell Tower fire could be waiting over a year to get rehoused, according to the government.

Grenfell United, a group representing some survivors and families of the dead, wrote a letter to local government minister Sajid Javid in protest.

The group also asked London mayor Sadiq Khan to make an "urgent and personal intervention to get victims into homes".

Theresa May had promised that people forced to move by the fire would be rehoused within three weeks.

The Tories' shocking admission comes as the inquiry into the immediate causes of the fire gets underway. In another



Protesters say, "No merger"

demonstration of his insensitivity, inquiry chair Sir Martin Moore-Bick told people to stay seated as a fire alarm sounded in the inquiry rooms.

Campaigners and survivors will have to look to each other for the solidarity they

need to get justice. The Tories in local and central government, and their judges, have lost survivors' trust.

■ **HOUSING RESIDENTS** fired the opening salvo in their campaign against Savills on Monday.

Around 80 percent of properties sold at a previous Savills auction were social housing.

The protest was called by Genesis and Notting Hill residents. The residents originally came together to resist the merger of the two housing associations.

The merger was seen as a prelude to the housing associations selling off what they could and hiking the rents for the rest of us.

Graham Hodgkin

EDUCATION



ON STRIKE at Connaught School earlier this month

School workers walk out for higher pay in London

WORKERS AT Connaught School for Girls struck over pay on Thursday of last week.

It was the fourth walkout for NEU education union members at the east London school.

Workers are demanding an inner London pay rate as an outer London school.

The union suspended two planned days of strikes last Tuesday and Wednesday for talks at conciliation service

Acas. Thursday's strike went ahead after no agreement was reached.

Parents brought croissants to the picket line to show their support.

Strikers have also had donations and messages of support from local campaigners, trade unionists and Labour Party members.

They plan two three-day strikes after Easter.

● Send messages of support to pablophillips2007@yahoo.co.uk

HIGHER EDUCATION

Fat cat university bosses try to sneak through cuts

BOSSSES AT the University of Liverpool want to cut over 200 jobs.

The UCU union said it was "seeking more information on what exactly this will mean for staff and students".

Meanwhile workers at the Open University (OU) face course cuts of around a third.

The UCU said leaked proposals suggested that 41 degree courses at the OU

would be cut, leaving just 71 available. It said the cuts would "destroy the Open University as we know it".

UCU members at the OU struck against cuts and closures in 2015 after delivering their first ever vote for strikes.

After a series of rolling strikes at different OU centres, union leaders failed to escalate the action.

FURTHER EDUCATION



A PREVIOUS picket line at Hull College

Hull College fight for jobs

UCU UNION members at Hull College are balloting for strikes to stop job cuts.

Bosses want to slash 231 posts at the college—and have threatened to dismiss workers who refuse to sign up to new contracts.

When UCU members at Lambeth College in south London faced similar attacks in 2014, they held two all-out strikes in response. The action

forced bosses to retreat on some of their attacks and promise that a new, worse contract would not be imposed on existing staff.

The attacks in east Yorkshire affect workers at all three college sites in Hull, Goole and Harrogate. The UCU said that, if the cuts go through, the college will lose around a third of its workforce.

The ballot ends on 18 April.

RAIL WORKERS

Strikes at three rail firms to keep the service safe

WORKERS AT three rail companies are striking or taking other forms of industrial action this week in separate disputes.

Members of the RMT union at Arriva Rail North (Northern) walked out for 24 hours on Monday in a long-running row over the role of guards. They planned another strike on Thursday.

Strikers picketed across the north of England including in Newcastle, Carlisle, York, Manchester and Wigan.

There was a large and lively picket line outside Hull Paragon Interchange.

Representatives from the local trades council were flanked by an RMT union banner proclaiming, "This strike is all about safety."

Strikers planned to continue picketing to cover afternoon shifts.

Some pickets talked about escalating the dispute.

Solid

One said, "Maybe management didn't expect us to stay so solid. Our stance is to keep striking."

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said that the union's efforts to settle the dispute had been "kicked back in our faces".

He said, "This dispute is



PICKETS IN Newcastle on Monday

PICTURE: RMT/TWITTER

about putting the safety of the travelling public before the profits of the private train companies.

"Prime minister Theresa May and transport secretary Chris Grayling are happy to cheer on rail companies like Arriva that rip off passengers." The dispute can't be

allowed to drag on—there has to be enough escalation to crack the bosses. This is about safety as well as jobs and conditions.

Arriva Rail North bosses' plan to expand driver only operation will mean nearly half a million trains running annually without a

safety-critical guard on board.

The company has been embroiled in a year-long argument with the RMT over staffing and guards.

The dispute is also affecting four other train operators, including South Western Railway (SWR).

RMT members on SWR will refuse to work rest days over the four-day Easter weekend, starting on Friday, accusing the company of refusing to engage with the union.

Guards and drivers will also take further action over Easter by refusing to work in accordance with a restructuring deal.

Result

SWR workers recently re-baloted on whether to continue the action as a result of the Tory anti-union laws. They delivered a 73 percent yes vote on a 63 percent turnout.

Meanwhile, talks were held on Monday over a 48-hour stoppage by RMT members on London's Docklands Light Railway (DLR) (see right).

A national protest on 25 April is set to mark the second anniversary of the bitter disputes over the role of guards on trains.

RMT members at Southern, SWR, Greater Anglia, Merseyrail and Northern have held a series of strikes in the disputes.

All these franchises should be revoked and the railways immediately renationalised under democratic control so that people come before profit.

Thanks to Wendy Dobbs

DLR

Docklands Light Railway talks on

THE RMT attended talks with Keolis Amey Docklands bosses at the Acas conciliation service on Monday.

RMT members on London's Docklands Light Railway are in dispute over a range of issues. They planned to strike for 48 hours from 4am on Wednesday if the dispute is not resolved.

Workers also plan to strike between 4am on Friday 20 April and 3.59am on Tuesday 24 April.

The union said there has been a "comprehensive breakdown in industrial relations".

Issues include attacks on rostering agreements, health and safety failures and outsourcing of jobs through the use of contractors.

GOVIA THAMESLINK

Another step to a faceless railway

GOVIA THAMESLINK bosses confirmed on Monday that they had run the first fully automated passenger services through central London.

The RMT union said the news was "another step towards a faceless railway".

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said, "Not content with throwing the guards off their trains, Govia Thameslink Railway is now determined to diminish the role of the driver."

"There's a clear pattern here. This isn't about improving reliability and service quality for the public, it's about maximising the profits of the private rail operator."

HEALTH WORKERS

Wigan NHS workers take on outsourcing

by TOMÁŠ TENGYEL-EVANS

HUNDREDS OF low-paid health workers in Wigan are resisting bosses' attempts to outsource their jobs to a firm run by their former Labour MP.

The Unison union members planned to protest outside the hospital on Wednesday morning—and could move to a formal ballot for industrial action.

Hospital bosses want to transfer 900 jobs and support services to WLL Solutions Ltd, a company currently chaired by Neil Turner.

The firm is wholly owned by Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh NHS Foundation Trust. But the move opens the door to full-scale

privatisation. Unison members last week voted by 82 percent against the outsourcing proposals on a 69 percent turnout.

Sean Gibson, Unison North West regional organiser, said, "We will be holding meetings across the main hospital sites with a view to a formal ballot for industrial action."

"We are open to meet with management, but they have to be clear that their outsourcing proposal is simply unacceptable to the vast majority of our members."

There is widespread support for the workers among other hospital workers, trade unionists and Wigan Labour MP Lisa Nandy.

One Wigan hospital

worker, whose service has already been outsourced, spoke to Socialist Worker.

"What is happening in Wigan could be the start of something big right across the country," he said.

"It shows that workers need to organise and fight back. I will be supporting this fight and I hope we can get the community to support the workers."

The scandal of Carillion has exposed the scam of privatisation.

Workers must fight to stay wholly in the NHS.

Unison should use the fight at Wigan to launch a national campaign—including strikes—against all forms of NHS privatisation.

Every trade unionist should build support for the workers.

TEACHERS

Fight now to stop Tory attacks in schools

by PAUL MCGARR, east London

THE FINAL annual conference of the National Union of Teachers takes place in Brighton over Easter weekend.

It does so as the union is merging with the ATL to form the National Education Union.

There is a developing crisis in education. Funding cuts, and a new funding formula which will hit schools in deprived urban areas hardest, are beginning to bite.

Unless reversed, the result will be staff cuts, larger class sizes, poorer education and less support for the most vulnerable students.

Teacher workload is still at crisis point. And after eight years of below-inflation pay awards, living standards—even by the government's admission—have been cut by over 10 percent on average.

The government plans not

just to keep the hated end of primary Sats test, but plans a baseline test for four year olds as well. And schools minister Nick Gibb wants more tests in early secondary school too.

Gibb and others in government, backed by giant edu-business corporations, want to destroy any notion of a child-centred education.

Schools are also being used to push racism, most recently with the Islamophobic attack on students wearing the hijab by Ofsted boss Amanda Spielman.

Almost all delegates will back calls for sustained campaigning on all these issues.

Conference is to hear a priority motion opposing the attack on the hijab.

It will also debate a call for a national demonstration on cuts, action on pay, and a major conference on pedagogy and the curriculum.

Most delegates will share the aim of seeing a Corbyn-led Labour government, with its promise of a National Education Service.

But for some, including the union leadership, too often this can mean that good campaigns shy away from a fight to win change now.

This is dangerous. An election could be several years away, and without fights now the Tories will continue to inflict real damage. A lack of open struggle can undermine the prospect of a more radical government being elected.

And passivity can then undermine the basis for ensuring any such government withstands the pressures it will inevitably come under.

That is why Socialist Worker supporters, alongside others, will be arguing at conference for building on the excellent campaigning work the union has done.

UNIVERSITY DEAL IS NOT ENOUGH

by SADIE ROBINSON

UCU UNION members were set to meet on Wednesday this week to discuss a new offer in their pensions dispute.

A wave of powerful strikes has got bosses on the run. Now's the time to increase pressure, not withdraw it.

Carlo Morelli is on the UCU's national executive committee and a union rep at Dundee university. "Activists are going through this offer with a fine-tooth comb and a healthy dose of cynicism," he told Socialist Worker.

Union members across over 60 universities have staged 14 days of strikes to defend their USS pension scheme. Bosses wanted to turn the defined benefit scheme into a defined contribution one.

Claimed

They claimed there was no alternative. The strikes have shown up their lies.

Earlier this month they offered a deal that would have kept part of a defined benefit scheme but was still an attack. Now they say they will back off while an "expert



BOSSSES ARE only on the run because of the strikes by UCU union members

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

panel" decides the scheme's future.

The scheme would stay the same until at least April next year. "It's not good enough," said Carlo. "We need a deal that says there will be no detriment to the scheme after next April. We have to win

the status quo—or better."

Bosses are desperate to stop the strikes. They hope to use the offer to buy time, undermine strikers' momentum and attack the scheme at a later date.

Why give them time to regroup? And why can't

workers keep the scheme they have now?

The deal commits both parties to recommend "measures aimed at stabilising the fund". It could see "contributions or benefits adjusted in any direction".

This, and the talk of

"affordability challenges" gives too much ground to the idea that there is a deficit. In fact, the scheme is in surplus.

Carlo said the method used to value the scheme is "at the heart of the problem".

If the panel accepts that valuation formula, then we're

back to square one," he said. "The pensions regulator has to accept a change in the valuation.

"And it has to be recognised that this is a collective scheme.

"We don't want a two-tier scheme where new members get worse pensions."

Confident

Bosses often retreat only to resume their attacks when they feel more confident.

There should be no agreement to any deal, or a ballot of UCU members, unless they agree the outcome will protect the present scheme.

If the leadership does call a ballot, workers should vote no to the deal.

Bosses have only made their latest offer because of the growing strikes.

The threat of more action can push them to go further. The union should name the dates of the next strikes and fight to win an outright victory.

More online

For more on the pensions battle, go to bit.ly/SWpensions

FURTHER EDUCATION

College workers reject bosses' money lies and strike to demand higher pay

WORKERS ACROSS six further education colleges began a three-day strike on Tuesday in an ongoing dispute over pay and conditions.

The strikes hit City and Islington, Westminster Kingsway, Croydon, Lambeth, Sandwell and the College of Haringey and North East London.

UCU union members at Havering college began a two-day walkout on the same day.

Workers are fighting a 1 percent pay offer and also have local demands over pay and conditions too.

At Sandwell College



Strikers were in high spirits at Lambeth College in south London

in the West Midlands, workers have demanded a 6.9 percent rise.

UCU equalities rep Dom told Socialist Worker, "We're not backing down.

"We deserve what we're asking for and we're out to win."

UCU branch secretary Dave added, "Our picket line was bigger than during the last strike.

"Since the dispute our membership has grown by 30 percent.

"It's really caught fire."

UCU members at Lambeth College in south London have demanded 9.9 percent after being denied any

rise for nine years.

UCU branch secretary Mandy told Socialist Worker, "We've been told that £5 million has been made available for a merger, but hasn't been allocated for anything.

Million

"It would cost just £1.5 million to give all staff the rise we are demanding."

Striker Julia added, "The money's there.

"They need to prioritise teachers and education."

Like many, Julia said that the lack of a rise was bad for students.

"It just shows how

completely undervalued further education is," she said. "A lot of our students had a rough experience of school.

"Staff really put in the effort to help those young people, and adults who return to education.

"Bosses are devaluing what staff are doing."

Workers at three colleges that were set to strike—Tower Hamlets, Hackney and Redbridge—suspended action after the offer of a new deal.

But a significant number argued to keep striking to win more, and workers could join action in the future.